

Host Nation COVID-19 News Stories for April 18

Corona crisis reach record numbers

Italy has reported a record number of people who have survived infection with the novel coronavirus. Within 24 hours, 2,563 people recovered, said the chief of civil defence, Angelo Borrelli. However, 575 people have also died since Thursday evening. Borrelli said that the number of people who fell ill was just under 107,000, 355 more than the previous day. The number of deaths since the beginning of the pandemic in Italy is at least 22,745 - the second highest number worldwide after the United States, where more than 34,500 people have died. (*News channel Stern April 17, 2020*)

Reduced nitrogen dioxide levels Improved air quality, thanks to Corona

According to satellite measurements, nitrogen dioxide pollution in Germany and in large parts of Europe has decreased significantly. North German Broadcasting Corporation (NDR) information suggests that researchers attribute this to the "corona effect".

An analysis by scientists from the University of Bremen shows that nitrogen dioxide pollution in Germany has decreased by more than 30 percent in recent weeks compared to the same time last year. This is the result of satellite data from the European Space Agency (ESA), which the Bremen researchers evaluated.

Andreas Richter from the Bremen Institute for Environmental Physics explained that a similar reduction was also observed for Italy, Spain, France and numerous other European countries. (*News channel Ard April 18, 2020*)

German police demand mandatory masks

A further step in the fight against the corona virus: a new clinical study is said to have demonstrated positive effects of Remdesivir in over 100 corona patients. Nearly all patients were discharged after only one week.

Remdesivir is an active substance not yet approved as a treatment for Covid-19. It was originally developed against Ebola and is produced by the Californian pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences. It is one of the first medications that has been shown in laboratory tests to have a positive effect on Covid-19 infections.

The Police Union (GdP) and the German Police Union (DPoIG) have expressed their support for a general obligation of wearing a mouth and nose mask in buses, trains and shops. "It is desirable to have a nationwide standardized regulation", DPoIG director Rainer Wendt told the newspaper "Handelsblatt". GdP vice president Joerg Radek said, "the more people wear a mouth and nose protector in larger crowds, the better their own protection and that of others against possible corona virus transmission". In comparison to other requirements, he said, it is "the less invasive in order to minimize the risk of infection". Radek emphasized that the measure also helps police officers in their operations. The two Union representatives also called for

sufficient protective material for police officers to protect them from infection. *(News channel Ntv April 18, 2020)*

Germany- New corona numbers confirm the trend of the last days

As of Saturday morning, the number of coronavirus infections in Germany has risen to 138,449, according to the official reporting figures of the German states. In addition, the number of deaths rose to 4,154. Presently, 55,756 people in Germany are infected and almost 78,600 patients have already recovered. The incidence throughout Germany is 166.8 cases per hundred thousand inhabitants. This confirms the cautiously developments of the last few days. According to the RKI figures, which are updated daily, the total number of infected person on Friday was 137,439, which corresponds to an increase of 3,609 patients. *(Robert Koch Institute April 18, 2020)*

President of the medical association considers closing of day-care centres as appropriate

Klaus Reinhardt, President of the German Medical Association, believes that from a medical point of view, it makes sense that daycare centers should initially remain closed and young students should stay at home. "Younger children do not yet understand the current situation and associated restrictions such as keeping their distance." Reinhardt also demands that visits to senior home facilities should be allowed even during the Corona crisis. However, this would require relatives to wear protective clothing and masks. *(News channel ntv April 18, 2020)*

Bundeswehr keeps 37,000 soldiers ready for Corona mission

The Bundeswehr now has more than 37,000 soldiers ready to support states and municipalities in the Corona crisis. More than 17,000 men and women from the medical service of the armed forces were part of this "Corona Assistance" operation, according to a draft for the head of the Ministry of Defense, which is available to the German Press Agency. *(News channel ntv April 18, 2020)*

Weil expects a mandatory use of masks soon.

Stephan Weil, Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, expects that "protective masks for everyday use will soon be part of our everyday life" and that they will "soon become mandatory" in public transport in general. However, such a step could only be taken "as soon as sufficient masks are available", Weil told the "Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung" on Saturday. Keeping a distance and hygiene would continue to be "the key to success" in the fight against the Corona pandemic. So far, Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania have decided to make it mandatory to wear masks or face-cloths on public transport, and Saxony also for shopping in shops. In addition, there is a general urgent recommendation by the federal and state

governments to wear at least an improvised mouth and nose protection. (*News channel Ntv April 18, 2020*)

Town twinning during the Corona crisis: Stuttgart mayor writes twin towns - "Strengthening intercultural exchange"

Countries around the world are currently struggling with the new corona virus. The Federal Foreign Office has issued a worldwide travel warning. In the current situation, it is impossible for people from the twin cities to meet in person. Stuttgart Lord Mayor, Fritz Kuhn wrote a letter to his colleagues in Stuttgart's 10 twin cities to express solidarity even in difficult times. This was announced by the city on Saturday, April 18

The letter reads: "As Lord Mayor, I know that you and I face similar challenges in order to ensure the health, social stability and economic existence of our population. The difficulties we are currently facing are of unknown dimensions for many of us and have led to severe restrictions - in many cases even a temporary standstill - of our work and our social and community life".

This standstill also affected international meetings between the people of the twin cities, the Mayor continued. All joint actions and events had to be cancelled or postponed. The Lord Mayor writes: "It is important to me to assure you that once this health crisis is over, we will work with you to revive the diversity and vitality of interaction between the people of our cities.

Until then, new ways of exchange, presentation and dialogue could emerge. Mayor Kuhn appealed: "Let us use this opportunity to make the work of our town twinning even more effective and strengthen intercultural exchange.

The state capital Stuttgart has 10 twin cities on four continents: St. Helens (England), Cardiff (Wales), St. Louis (Missouri/USA), Strasbourg (France), Mumbai (India), Menzel Bourguiba (Tunisia), Cairo (Egypt), Lodz (Poland), Brno (Czech Republic), Samara (Russia). The first partnership with St. Helens was already established in 1948. This year, St. Louis and Stuttgart are celebrating the 60th anniversary of their twinning, and in May a wide range of events were to begin, which, with partners such as the German-American Centre and the Stuttgart Reds, would have focused on transatlantic friendship.

Of the countries in which Stuttgart's twin cities are located, France, Great Britain and the United States are currently the most affected by the corona pandemic. Compared to the other partner countries, these countries have the highest number of infected cases and deaths. In India, the rigorous curfew is expected to have serious consequences for the poor sections of the population. The External Relations Department is continuously in contact with the partner cities and project partners and is monitoring the situation closely. (*Press release Stuttgart April 18, 2020*)